

July 2, 2015

The Honorable Juan Manuel Santos  
President of Colombia  
Casa de Nariño  
Carrera 8 N. 7-26  
Bogotá, Colombia

BY EMAIL

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) we are writing today to express our concern for the safety of human rights defender, BERENICE CELEITA. From the evening of June 20th until the early hours of June 21st, a vehicle was parked outside Berenice Celeita's home in Bogotá. From her window she saw that the two occupants sitting at the front of the vehicle were taking photographs of her house and she saw a camera flash firing.

Berenice had just returned from a tour to Canada and the USA where she met with various organizations, institutions and government officials, including CUPE. We discussed with her the human rights situation in Colombia, including the situation in Buenaventura. We specifically discussed the importance of bringing to justice those with international economic interests which have benefitted from and have been responsible for human rights abuses and violations that have occurred during the course of Colombia's long-running internal armed conflict.

CUPE supports the work of NOMADESC and the communities and organizations with whom they work. We have travelled to Colombia on several occasions to meet with these individuals and communities in order to better understand the situation and seek ways to support their pursuit of justice.

It is extremely worrisome that while the peace talks continue, Colombians who are working for peace and human rights continue to be subjected to threats, harassment and intimidation.

We respectfully request that:

1. Protection measures, in strict accordance with their wishes, be put in place to ensure the safety of Berenice Celeita, her family and other members of NOMADESC.

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PAUL MOIST – National President / Président national CHARLES FLEURY – National Secretary-Treasurer / Secrétaire-trésorier national

FRED HAHN – DANIEL LÈGÈRE – LUCIE LEVASSEUR – KELLY MOIST – MARLE ROBERTS – General Vice-Presidents / Vice-présidences générales



2. A full and impartial investigation into this incident, and previous incidents directed towards NOMADESC staff, be carried out and that the results be published and those responsible be prosecuted.
3. The Colombian Government fulfil their obligations to ensure human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear, as laid out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Thank you very much for your attention to this urgent matter.

In solidarity,



PAUL MOIST  
National President



CHARLES FLEURY  
National Secretary-Treasurer

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cc: Sr. Eduardo Montealegre Lynett, Fiscal General de la Nación; Sr. Germán Vargas Lieras, Vicepresidente de la República; Sr. Luis Carlos Villegas, Ministro de Defensa; Sr. Juan Fernando Cristo, Ministro del Interior; Sr. Nicolás Liorreda Ricaurte, Ambassador for Colombia in Canada; NOMADESC; MP Ed Fast; MP Rob Nichol森; MP Don Davies; MP Paul Dewar